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FRENCH EXPERIENCE WITH REPRESENTATIVE GOVERNMENT IN THE WEST INDIES¹

THE problem of representative government in tropical colonies is beset with extraordinary difficulties, which are crying for solution just at present, when so many important colonial establishments have been founded in those regions. The simplest method of solving the question, that of entrusting the administration to the discretion of tried officials, as is done in the English crown colonies, does not satisfy the political aspirations of the residents in the colonies and also runs counter to the ideal of government by consent, and of the political and moral amelioration of the natives. In case a representative council is established, in order to give opportunity for the expression of the political will of the inhabitants, it may be based either upon a restricted election or upon manhood suffrage. The latter solution has been tried only in the French tropical colonies. There the councils-general have been given real legislative power and are not merely advisory as in the English crown colonies. Moreover, the governor, while not legally responsible to the council, is nevertheless forced ultimately to yield to its will, on account of its power to refuse certain important appropriations.

The French West Indies are the best imaginable field for political assimilation; the conditions which may be regarded as rendering that policy difficult or impossible are absent in the Antilles. There are two such contingencies: either, the population is so abjectly barbarous or decadent that even the rudimentary facts of a higher civilization cannot be understood by it; or it has a long-established social order, and its traditional religion, customs and political institutions lead it to resist assimilation to an alien society, as is the case in countries like Siam, Burma, and Cambodia. Neither contingency applies to the West Indies.

The black and colored population of Martinique, originally recruited from various parts of Africa, has through the long era of slavery lost most of the connection with its older life. When the patriarchal organization of slavery was abolished in 1848, it became to a certain extent an atomistic society upon which assimilation could work with full force. Moreover, the colored population is

¹ Paper read before the American Historical Association, December 28, 1900.

itself desirous of becoming more and more like the former masters. The negroes of the French Antilles are in a distinctly favorable position, being in full possession and enjoyment of all the political rights of French citizens. They are not *de facto* disfranchised as in the United States, nor have they relapsed into savagery as have the blacks in the interior of Hayti. The French islands are therefore perhaps the best field for a study of the political capacity and the social tendencies of a colored population which is allowed to govern itself after republican models.

The importance of the political history of these islands becomes still greater when we consider that they have been practically the model for French colonial organization and legislation up to the present. All French dependencies were looked upon as colonies, and the theories which in the enthusiasm of the Revolution had been applied to the small French colonies of that time were extended to the large possessions acquired after 1870. The Antilles and Guiana are the last remnant of a vast empire in America and as such have always been treated with much liberality and favor. Moreover, the representatives of these colonies at Paris were, on account of their familiarity with colonial affairs, looked upon as authorities in all colonial questions, and they took every opportunity to advocate the policy of representative government and political assimilation to which they owed their own importance.

Thus these islands have had an influence upon French history out of all proportion to their size; while in themselves they illustrate all the problems of a modern dynamic society,—the questions of the use of political power, of public education and religion, the distribution of property, and socialism. To these are superadded the intensely interesting problems that always attend the meeting of races on different planes of civilization. The very smallness of the islands makes them specially valuable to the student; like the Athens of Plato and Aristotle, Martinique is a miniature world in which almost all social problems can be studied in a simple form. The student will derive both assistance and pleasure from the insular self-importance and naïveté of the inhabitants.

It will be necessary briefly to review the history of these colonies before 1870, in order that we may understand the bases of the present institutions. Though slavery was abolished in 1848, the whites remained in power politically for some time and also retained the control of labor, which is a question of life and death to industry in tropical colonies. A decree¹ of February 13, 1852, imposed on agricultural laborers the obligation of having a contract

¹ Cited in Huc, *Martinique*, Paris, 1877.

of engagement for one year, or of carrying a *livret*, in default of which they could be punished as vagabonds. Strict penalties were also imposed for missing the daily work. But this measure was too rigid ; it defeated its own purpose, in that it caused laborers to strive to become small proprietors and thus to escape from its operation. To supply the necessary labor the system of Hindu immigration was next resorted to. Beginning in 1853 regular importations were made, and by 1870 sixteen thousand Hindu coolies had been introduced into Martinique. A strong fiscal institution, *La Société de Crédit Foncier Colonial*, was created in 1863, for the purpose of assisting the landholders under the new economic conditions.¹ By these means the proprietors of plantations sought to weather the dangers into which the abolition of slavery had brought them.

The political institutions of the French West Indies are the result of two opposite policies,—the Republican policy of absolute centralized assimilation, and the policy of a colonial régime with special laws and privileged local legislatures or general councils, inaugurated by the July monarchy and taken up again under the Second Empire. It was the policy of the three successive Republics to regard the colonies as integral parts of the national territory, to assimilate their administration to that of a French department, and to allow the colonial population a voice in the national parliament. On the contrary, the Monarchy, as well as the Empire, looked upon the colonies as *pays d'exception*, to be governed by special laws and decrees, hence not entitled to participation in the national legislature ; they however favored the policy of giving considerable powers, mostly of an administrative nature, to the colonial councils. The products of these two policies constitute the political institutions of the French West Indies since 1870 ; they have never been harmonized, nor has the one been definitely abandoned for the other ; so these colonies enjoy both representation in the national parliament, and the possession of local councils with a great latitude of functions. In reviewing briefly the history of these institutions we shall recognize their somewhat haphazard origin as well as the grave practical difficulties which are due to the lack of subsequent harmonization.

Before the Revolution, the old French colonies, Martinique, Guadeloupe, Guiana, and Réunion were administered, much as are the present English crown colonies, by a governor, with the assistance of an executive council and a colonial assembly summoned at irregular intervals. By royal decree of 1787 the organization of this assembly was regulated and the qualification for suffrage was

¹ *Annuaire de la Martinique*, 1900, p. 208.

fixed as the ownership of at least twelve slaves. With the Revolution came representation in the national assemblies; the creole French were at that time especially popular and influential in French society; so their request for representation was readily accorded. Seventeen *cahiers* supported this demand; that of the *Tiers État* of Versailles even went so far as to propose complete assimilation of the colonies.¹ The idea of colonial representation in parliament is nowhere directly suggested by the French pre-Revolutionary publicists, although it is completely in accord with their general system. It remained for the practical American, Benjamin Franklin, and for Adam Smith, to propose in its concrete form this extreme measure of "Latin assimilation." Its adoption by the French nation at this time was undoubtedly due to the influence and enterprise of the creoles residing in France, who relied on the traditional policy first announced by Louis XIII. in his edict of 1642 "que les descendants des Français habitués ès dites îles seront réputés naturels français, capable de toutes charges et honneurs."

By the constitution of 1795, the colonies were absolutely assimilated to the French national territory² and treated as departments. Before these provisions could produce any practical results they were abrogated by the Consular Constitution of 1799, which deprived the colonies of national representation and placed them again under a régime of special law. Not until the end of the Monarchy of the Restoration, however, was colonial administration definitely organized. By the ordinance of February 9, 1827, there was established in each colony an appointive general council with purely advisory powers. Under the July Monarchy, by the *Charte Coloniale* of April 24, 1833, this council was made elective, with a very high qualification for suffrage (30,000 fr. movable property, or the annual payment of 300 fr. direct taxes). This local assembly sent two delegates to Paris to act as intermediaries between the colony and the ministry. As the colonies had no deputies or senators, the Council retained the services of members of the Chamber and the Senate, who in return for a handsome fee defended the colonial interests within the national parliament.

The Revolutionary government of 1848 returned to the policy of absolute assimilation; it abrogated the system of special laws and discontinued the general councils; as a compensation the colonies received the right of representation in the national parliament, under a system of manhood suffrage in which the newly emancipated negroes were included.

¹ *Archives Parl.*, V. 220.

² Art. 6. "*Les Colonies françaises sont parties intégrantes de la République, et sont soumises à la même loi constitutionnelle.*"

In 1852 the system of special legislation was again restored on the ground that the interests and needs of the colonies differed essentially from those of the mother country, and that the hand of authority and the soothing influence of time were necessary to harmonize the social elements distracted by a radical revolution. It was stated that it was not so much the purpose of the government to discard the colonial element in metropolitan legislation, as to free the situation in the colonies from the agitation of political elections.¹ The right of representation in the national parliament was accordingly annulled.² The Senate, which had been given the power of organic legislation by the constitution of 1852, decreed by the *Sénatus-consulte* of 1854 (May 3) that there should be in the colonies appointive general councils with functions analogous to those of the French departmental assemblies. This measure laid the foundation of the present system of colonial councils. The function of ordinary legislation for the colonies was by the Senate delegated to the executive power, to be exercised by means of administrative decrees, or by orders in council of state. This arrangement is known as the *système des décrets*.

By the very important *Sénatus-consulte* of 1866 (July 4) the powers of the colonial councils were substantially augmented, and they acquired distinctive attributes not possessed by the departmental assemblies. Thus they received the power to legislate on all matters concerning the management of public property, acquisition thereof by the colony, and grants made out of it; on public works and concessions for their execution; on the system of roads; and finally, most important of all, they were given the right to vote all taxes and contributions, to fix the customs tariff and the tariff of the *octroi de mer*.³ The councils remained appointive, one half of their number being named by the governor, the other half by the municipal councils, which were themselves appointed by the head executive. The above attributes of legislation, together with extensive powers of deliberation and advice on matters of the budget and colonial administration, gave the councils great influence. Still they were rather an administrative council than a legislature and had no share in the ordinary civil or criminal legislation, as the French codes were in force in the colonies. The governments immediately following the Revolution of 1870 did not change these functions of the general councils, but, as the principle of election by manhood suffrage was introduced, they soon became almost

¹ *Exposé des Motifs, Procès-verbaux, Sénat*, 1852, I. 447 ff.

² *Décret Organique du 2 février, 1852*.

³ The *pacte colonial*, or system of navigation laws, had been abolished in 1861.

independent of central control. The powers originally granted to an appointive council were left unaltered when that body became an elective assembly. Nor was the national executive deprived of the authority of legislating for the colonies by decree or order in council; this *système des décrets* has become a special grievance of the colonies, since that time.¹ In 1871 colonial representation in the national parliament was re-established, the deputies being elected by universal suffrage.

The system as it has existed since 1870 may therefore be briefly described as follows. The colonies participate in national legislation through the presence of their representatives in the Senate and Chamber of Deputies. General colonial legislation, however, is settled almost entirely by the national executive, and colonial matters come up in the parliament only by way of interpellation or when the budget is being discussed. The local colonial assemblies originate much of the administrative legislation, either by the exercise of their powers enumerated above, or by deliberating upon measures which are given final force of law by *arrêté* of the governor or decree of the head of the state. The civil service in the colonies is recruited chiefly by appointment through the governor; but as he is himself dependent upon the majority in a general council, the latter body exercises great influence in the selection of public officials. It is the operation and the effects of this system in the years from 1870 to 1900 that we desire to investigate in an inquiry which may perhaps throw some light on the character of political life in tropical colonies among a colored population. The value of institutions like colonial representation in the national parliament and elective local assemblies or councils is very much disputed, and but little is known about the exact influence of these institutions upon political activity and party life both in the colonies and in the mother country. Other interesting questions that will claim our attention are the merits and defects of the "system of decrees," the extension of the national constitution to colonial possessions, and the relations of colonial politics to religion, education and socialism. While not neglecting the political experience of Guadeloupe, as well as of French Guiana, we will take Martinique as the typical example of a French tropical colony.

The political history of Martinique since 1870 may be divided into three periods. During the first decade the whites were still practically in control. The end of this period saw the organization of the mulatto government which resulted in the almost complete withdrawal of the whites from politics. While no clearly marked party

¹ It is the subject of Senator Isaac's book, *Constitution et Sénatus-Consultes*.

divisions existed in the second decade, the third and final period brought the growth of two factions among the governing class, who assumed the name and methods of political parties.

No immediate revolution followed upon the establishment of manhood suffrage. The administration in the island remained in the hands of a line of admirals, who, as governors, were bound by the traditions of the former régime. In the executive departments, even as late as 1879 the list of higher officials comprised very few colored men. Thus in the department of justice there were thirty-six whites to six colored men,¹ while in that of the interior the numbers were fourteen to four. In the colonial council the whites only gradually gave way to the increasing number of colored deputies. In 1875 there were still eleven white members out of a total of twenty-four; while in Guadeloupe they retained the majority, and in Réunion they held the whole council.² Thus it was possible to maintain institutions favorable to the great industries, such as the importation of coolie labor; a bounty was even voted to cultivators of coffee. Moreover, although both in 1871 and in 1874 an appropriation of one hundred thousand francs was set aside for the purpose of founding a lay *lycée*, the educational monopoly of the Church remained practically intact. Representatives of the latter expressed themselves in unmincing terms upon the tendency towards purely secular instruction: "L'Église n'acceptera jamais ce programme; elle luttera jusqu'au bout pour défendre ses droits, car, en se rappelant qu'elle seule a été chargée de sauver les âmes, elle se rappellera en même temps qu'à elle seule il a été dit: Allez et enseignez. L'éducation doit être religieuse, elle doit être chrétienne ou elle ne sera pas."³

Expressions like these are the signs of the coming storm. Such signs were not wanting, especially on the part of the whites, who were violent in their opposition to the growing political ambitions of the colored population. In 1877 the governor, Admiral Kergrist, was recalled by the home government which was then in the hands of the "men of the sixteenth of May," because of his liberal tendencies.⁴ His successor, Admiral Grasset, soon came in collision with the general council. He had established a chamber of agriculture composed of the leading landed proprietors of the island.⁵ The council looked upon this as a political movement favoring the white class and refused to vote the credit demanded.

¹ *Annuaire de la Martinique*, 1879.

² Schoelcher, *Polémique Coloniale*, I. 11.

³ *Le Bien Public*, *Bulletin Religieux de la Martinique*, June 24, 1876.

⁴ Schoelcher, *Polémique Coloniale*, Paris, 1882, I. 144.

⁵ Schoelcher, *Polémique Coloniale*, I. 148.

The struggle thus begun came to a head during the administration of Admiral Aube, in the years from 1879 to 1881. The council-general had become restive under the control of the naval governors. It felt its strength as a representative body and had discovered what power it could exercise by means of refusing money grants. By law of the state, ever since the organization of the general councils, the colonial expenses are divided into obligatory and facultative, the latter being fixed by the local assemblies ; as some important services are on the facultative list, the council is enabled to exercise great influence by a suppression of items in the budget. The home government defined its position through a letter¹ written by the Minister of the Marine and Colonies, Admiral Jauréguiberry, to Governor Aube on December 20, 1879. There the minister maintains that the council has no right to vote the suppression of employments or to diminish a credit for the salary of designated persons or for services organized by the ministry of the marine. Positions in these services are to be considered as guaranteed by a regular investiture. The general council refused to take this view of the case. It interpreted the word facultative liberally and held that, if it found a service superfluous or too expensive, it had full power to reduce the credit therefor, regardless of the position of individual incumbents.

In general matters of administration, the council showed itself unfavorable to the policy of internal improvements upheld by the governor. By imposing too strict a time-limit for a survey they defeated a railway project favored by him. They reduced the credits for the following services : roads and bridges, customs, registration, veterinary aid and dry dock. The latter was the subject of particular discussion between the governor and council. On October 26, 1880, the Minister of the Marine wrote to the governor calling his attention to the necessity of liberal credits for keeping up the dock, and deprecating the policy of retrenchment favored by the local assembly.² Notwithstanding this appeal the council voted a reduction of fifteen thousand francs. Another matter of controversy was the protection of the imported Hindu laborers. Under the date of July 14, 1880, the British consul had addressed to the governor a long complaint concerning the inefficiency of the immigration service. He stated that his remonstrances had constantly met the objection that the general council had not voted the necessary funds for the protection of the immigrants and he threatened a withdrawal

¹ Cited in Aube, *La Martinique*, Paris, 1882, p. 99. This book is an account of Aube's administration, with documentary evidences.

² Letter cited in Aube, *La Martinique*, p. 24.

of the treaty of 1862, by which the importation of labor was regulated.¹ Notwithstanding this remonstrance the general council voted the suppression of the special inspection service and re-established a system condemned by experience, under which town syndics performed the inspection and supervision. The council at this time also discontinued the bounty which had before been allowed to cultivators of coffee.

Governor Aube, supported by a unanimous privy council, refused to execute the resolutions of the assembly, which seemed to him contrary to the policy of the government as announced in the letter of December 20, 1879. But when Admiral Cloué in 1880 displaced Admiral Jauréguiberry in the Ministry of the Marine, Governor Aube lost the support of the home government in the course he had followed and was ordered to enforce the decisions taken by the general council.² Thus the powers of this assembly received confirmation from the highest quarters; small wonder that it accepted this action as an admission that it would be impossible to govern the colonies peaceably without its consent, and that it would henceforth have the virtual management of the civil service. At the same time a French civilian, M. Allègre, became governor, and the policy of having admirals in that position was definitely abandoned.³

By a law of July 27, 1880, the criminal jury was introduced into the French Antilles; the law of June 30, 1881, guaranteed the liberty of public meetings; and that of July 29 of the same year, extended the liberty of the press to the colonies. In its political and civil rights the colored population was thus completely assimilated to the mother country and, moreover, the colonial general councils had far greater powers than the provincial assemblies in France. Assimilation was the watchword of the day. On December 7, 1882, the council of Martinique, by a unanimous vote, passed the following resolution: "Considérant que la Martinique, qui est française depuis plus de deux siècles, qui jouit, depuis 1870, des mêmes droits politiques que la métropole, se trouve dans les meilleures conditions possibles pour être assimilée complètement à la mère patrie. . . . Que, pour parvenir à cette assimilation tant désirée, l'assemblée locale abandonnerait sans regret tous les droits et prérogatives qu'elle tient du Sénatus-Consulte du 4 juillet 1866, et qui sont inconnus aux conseils généraux métropolitains; Le Conseil renouvelle, en l'accentuant, le vœu qu'il a émis le 24 novembre

¹ Cited in Aube, *La Martinique*, p. 46.

² Aube, *La Martinique*, p. 56.

³ See *Annuaire de la Martinique*, 1900, p. 54.

1874, et demande que la Martinique soit constituée le plus tôt possible en département français." The general council of Guadeloupe had passed a similar resolution the preceding year.¹

The complete success of the colored majority in the general council in vindicating its political importance aroused bitter feelings of apprehension and anger on the part of the whites. The papers which represented their opinion had always been exceedingly severe in their judgment of the political ambitions of the lower classes. They now began a campaign of unrestricted vilification. How far this was allowed to go will appear from the following extracts. They refer to the former slaves as "ceux qu'une destinée bienveillante designa pour cet exode" from Africa. "Mais, malheureux, sans nous, vos yeux n'auraient jamais vue la lumière, les ossements de vos pères joncheraient les autels de vos dieux, et leurs crânes s'amoncèleraient en pyramides sinistres autour des palais de vos rois. . . . Ce préjugé, dont vous vous plaignez, a sa source dans l'infériorité de votre race, dans la différence indélébile qui existe entre elle et la nôtre, et aussi, faut-il le dire? dans la faible tendance à l'élévation des sentiments qui se manifeste chez ceux d'entre vous qui ont goûté les bienfaits de l'éducation."²

As an organ of the colored politicians, the newspaper *Les Colonies* had been founded in 1878 by M. Hurard, later a deputy in the French Chamber, with the co-operation and under the protection of M. Schoelcher, a French senator, who had been a leader in the emancipation movement of 1848 and who had since that time exerted himself in constant endeavors to vindicate the political rights of the colored population. Having thus acquired an official paper the mulatto régime was becoming fully organized. For over a decade it governed the island without any competition on the part of the whites, who had withdrawn from politics and devoted themselves entirely to industrial pursuits. Certain politicians like M. Hurard or M. Deproge led the "yellow aristocracy" and disposed of the political patronage of the island. The unmixed African population as yet took but little part in political life. In 1881, by instigation of some whites, a committee calling themselves the "Fifty Negroes" organized for the purpose of drawing the negro peasants and laborers into politics. They were, however, severely reprimanded by Senator Schoelcher,³ as introducing racial conflicts, and their agitation remained without result.

¹ Both resolutions are cited in Isaac, *Constitution et Sénatus-Consultes*, pp. 146, 150.

² *La Défense Coloniale*, février, 1882. Cited in Schoelcher, *Polémique Coloniale*, I. 11.

³ His address to the committee is given in Schoelcher, *Polémique Coloniale*, II. 64.

During the decade which followed, Martinique suffered much from the sugar crisis of 1884. The millenium which had been expected to result from political freedom, failed to make its appearance. Much of the old charm of creole life in its patriarchal stage had passed away and the colored population found that independence and political rights brought struggles and responsibility as well as power. Pessimism as to the future of the island became general. "C'est un pays perdu," was the prevailing sentiment. Despairing of the situation, many whites withdrew from the island. As the official reports make no distinction between the white, colored, and black population but embrace them all under the term *creoles*, we must go to private accounts for indications of changes in the relative positions of the various populations. Governor Aube in 1882 estimated the white population at eight thousand. By 1888, according to Mr. Lafcadio Hearn,¹ the number had fallen to five thousand and the emigration of the whites was still going on.

The character of political life and action during this period will appear from a survey of the legislation. In December, 1884, the council-general suppressed the importation of contract labor, which had existed since 1853 and which had caused considerable friction between council and governor. The coolie population had reached its highest figure, 14,299, in 1882. By 1889 it fell to 8712, while at present there are only 4,665 Indian laborers left in Martinique.² In 1883 the attempt was made to introduce the policy of division of large estates. Landed estates that had been forfeited to the colony or had been acquired by other means were cut up into hectare holdings and granted out to the poor peasant population.³ The laicization of the common school system, begun in 1881, was continued; by 1890 nine thousand pupils attended the public schools; this number rose to 12,000 within the following ten years. On the other hand public works and internal improvements received but little attention. The far-famed botanical garden at St. Pierre was allowed to relapse into a tropical wilderness. The appropriation for works in connection with the dry dock was reduced to 11,000 francs, while on the other hand 53,000 francs were spent in salaries in the dock administration.⁴ Attempts at railway construction were abandoned, and the telegraph line which connected St. Pierre with Fort-de-France was not extended, nor was there any efficient improvement of the highways in the island.

¹ *Two Years in the French West Indies*, New York, 1890.

² *Annuaire de la Martinique*, 1900, p. 634.

³ *Les Colonies* (the leading journal of Martinique), July 11 and October 6, 1900.

⁴ *Annuaire de la Martinique*, 1900, p. 349.

It was not long before there appeared among the leaders of the mulattoes the signs of coming factional struggles. Two men contended for leadership and management of the political patronage, M. Hurard, the founder of *Les Colonies*, and M. Deproge, both representatives of Martinique in the national parliament. About these two men the factional strife began to centre,—a warfare of much bitterness in which no expedient was left untried. In order to gain more influence both sides appealed to the black electors, who had hitherto taken but little part in political life. M. Deproge, who was an exceedingly shrewd political organizer, succeeded finally in obtaining the control of the political patronage. M. Hurard, on the other hand, to counterbalance this influence preached the policy of reconciliation among all classes of the island, and their co-operation in a unified political life without factional struggles. Thus he not only appealed to the black population, but also favored the participation of the whites in the politics of the island, and caused them to be nominated for public office. The two parties were originally called simply *Hurardist* and *Deprogist*, but as the breach between them became irremediable, they assumed the names of Republican-Progressist and Socialist respectively. Since the middle of the last decade, the whites have entered politics in large numbers, making use of the former party to give expression to their political aims. In the parliamentary election of 1898 the Progressists were successful; one of their candidates, M. Guibert, a resident of France, had been selected as a mark of conciliation between the races.¹ The other, M. Duguesnay, was one of the original leaders of the colored party in 1878. These two men are the deputies of Martinique in the national parliament at the present time. In the senatorial election which followed in 1899, upon the death of Senator Allègre, victory was with the Socialists, who had nominated M. Knight, a wealthy distiller and landowner. By the exigencies of colonial politics, this capitalist is now forced to make common cause in France with Fournière, Millerand, Rochefort, and Guesde. In Martinique the two parties are at present in a state of balance, the Socialists having a majority of one in the general council.

We must not, however, attribute to these parties a close adhesion to the principles advocated by the parties bearing the same names in France. Thus the Socialists, whose leaders are taken from among the property-holding colored bourgeoisie, pursue none of the measures favored by true Socialists. They leave the building of roads in private hands and refuse to pass a progressive income-tax, or vote subventions for old-age insurance; moreover they show no

¹ *Les Colonies*, April 11, 1900.

hostility to the Church but rather seek its favor. Their chief exertion seems to be to work on the dissatisfaction of the agricultural population by making vague promises of better wages, as well as by insinuating that the whites are trying to recover authority to gain the suffrage of the masses.¹ The Republican-Progressists on the other hand engage in so-called patronal socialism. They encourage the establishment of old-age pensions by the employers with subvention by the state. In their election manifestoes they state "We are representatives of the school of Brisson and Bourgeois, who have assisted in the triumph of the Republicans without leading the people to violence. We favor a policy of tolerance. The industrial proprietors ask for quiet and peace not sectary politics."²

The strife between the two factions is full of bitterness and animosity. Election frauds,³ political duels, and even assassinations are the constant accompaniment of electoral battles. The masses, the agricultural population, are appealed to by both sides, which puts them in a state of unrest and excitement. Political agitation of this kind led to a veritable drama in the year 1900. During the two preceding elections, both parties had made lavish promises of increased wages and "better times" to the proletariat. As the hopes thus raised were disappointed, there occurred in February, 1900, a large strike among the laborers on the sugar estates, resulting in the destruction of property. Military aid was summoned and a bloody encounter took place at the village of François, in which twelve laborers were killed and many seriously wounded. Although order was thus restored the lamentable event left behind it the most bitter feelings among the various classes of the island. It also led to an interpellation in parliament, which illustrates the manner of dealing with colonial questions in the home legislature. In the Chamber of Deputies the two Progressists of Martinique tried to fix the responsibility for the event upon the Socialists and upon the governor, who is a protégé of the Socialist leaders. Their principal effort seemed to be to use this occurrence for the purpose of getting the official patronage of the island into their hands. The Waldeck-Rousseau government had so far classed these deputies with the Nationalists and had not allowed them any influence over the patron-

¹ *Les Colonies*, March 17, 1900.

² *Les Colonies*, Oct. 6, 1900. The following election manifesto of a M. Paul Gaillardin is amusing in its *naïveté*. "Je suis un républicain convaincu, j'aime la République, ses lois sociales, ses institutions libérales et démocratiques, surtout lorsque ces lois et institutions sont appliquées par de représentants justes et *comme moi*, aimant la liberté."

³ *Les Colonies*, Aug. 11 and Sept. 25, 1900.

age, which was retained by the Socialist senator. While the deputies thus made a purely political and administrative question of the strike, the French Socialist deputies treated it as an economic strike due to the insufficient payment of the laborers and to the unfulfilled ante-election promises of the proprietors. The debate, however, left the field of colonial politics, when M. Ribot bitterly assailed the ministry for its alliance with the Socialists. Thereupon the latter, although inclined to censure the government for the use of troops against striking laborers, joined in the vote of confidence for the reason, as given by M. Carnaud, that they "did not wish to furnish an occasion to some ambitious men for gathering up a port-folio from the blood of the laborers of Martinique." The vote passed by a majority of forty-one.¹

The financial situation of the colonies is at present far from prosperous. Although there is no large public debt, the financial resources will be strained to the uttermost by the withdrawal of the subvention so far allowed by the French government. By the law of April 13, 1900, which went into effect on January 1, 1901, the colonies which have general councils are held responsible for all civil and police expenditures incurred by them. The only expenditures that will be met by the mother country are those for the military and naval defense. In this manner the amount to be met by the budget of Martinique will be increased from 5,729,000 francs in 1900 to about 8,000,000 francs.² As a return for this added financial burden, the colonies have asked for an increased autonomy of their general councils.³ By the tariff law of January 11, 1892, the powers of these councils had been cut down, inasmuch as the colonies were made subject to the French tariff and could no longer have a special customs system as under the *Sénatus-Consulte* of 1866. But at present there seems to be little disposition on the part of the French government to add to the colonial autonomy. In his speech during the interpellation of March 26 the Minister of Colonies, M. Decrais, said: "I believe that the authority of the government must be fortified, that it must be freed from all local influences." He added: "Il faut le dire, les passions politiques et électorales sont si vives sous ce climat ardent et dans cette île resserrée, elles y ont créée une telle atmosphère des haines personnelles

¹ The whole interpellation is reported in *Les Colonies*. It took place on March 26, 1900.

² *Les Colonies*, August 6, 1900.

³ See the proposal of M. Ursleur, deputy of Guiana, cited in *Annales des Sciences Politiques*, March, 1900, p. 233. He says: "Nous demandons à payer l'impôt du sang, nous demandons à rester citoyens français, mais nous désirons gérer nous-mêmes nos finances."

et locales, que la Chambre et le Gouvernement doivent y porter toute leur attention."

M. Picanon, the colonial inspector who visited the Antilles in 1900, expressed his dissatisfaction with the excessive functionarism in the islands. It was his opinion that the functionaries must be separated from politics and that the disastrous interference of politics with industry must cease. Political interference is especially dangerous in a small country with monoculture. His concrete recommendations are that there be instituted an irremovable magistrature of metropolitan origin and that the gendarmerie be put under the control of the governor instead of the *maires*.¹ There is therefore little likelihood that the demands of the colonies for further autonomy will find a favorable hearing with the government.

By the law of July 7, 1900, the French colonial army was organized. Even as far back as 1848, by the decree of May 3, the French laws of recruitment were made applicable to the colonies. The decree was never put into execution, but the organic law of the national army of July 15, 1889, again imposed the duty of military service upon the colonists. It was not however until 1900 that provisions for the actual organization of this part of the army were made. The colonial papers had always professed the eagerness of the colonists to pay the "impost of blood," and the final execution of the law was met with apparent enthusiasm, which is explained by the fact that service under the French colors is looked upon as imparting a new dignity to the negroes of the colonies.

It would be interesting to dwell on the mental characteristics and the general culture of the population of the islands, but we can here only indicate some facts that have a direct bearing on political life. While the leaders of the colored class are enthusiastic for education, and while large amounts of the public money are annually spent for that purpose,² still the ignorance of the masses is matter of constant comment on the part of the colonial papers. Among a population of 187,692 there were, in 1894, eighty thousand persons above the age of fourteen who were unable to read and write, leaving only 47,600 who had those accomplishments.³ The moral status of the population according to European standards is very low. Out of the number given above only 20,312 are married—that is, there are only about 10,000 households in Martinique, and three-fourths of the children are born out of wedlock. While the ceremonial of the Church still retains its

¹ *Les Colonies*, June 6, 1900.

² In the budget for 1900, 1,027,095 francs are appropriated for education, as over against 787,520 francs for public works. *Annuaire de la Martinique*, 1900, p. 296.

³ *Annuaire de la Martinique*, 1900, p. 630.

hold on the masses of the population, they are more deeply influenced by the arts of the native sorcerers (*quimboiseurs*). The Church has never been in sympathy with the political ambitions of the mulattoes, and it bewails the bitter struggles which party politics have introduced. When asked to celebrate a mass to commemorate the twenty-five years of political service of Député Duquesnay, Abbé Parel of Fort-de-France expresses himself as follows: "Political ambition does wrong to the people; it works their ruin. We have just had an electoral battle which has furnished too many recruits to hospitals and prisons. What we need is unity of the country under the guidance of the Church. Party strife is unchristian."¹ The leaders of the mulatto party have exerted themselves to acquire the intellectual culture and the liberal principles of France. No more faithful exponent of the tenets of the older Liberalism could be imagined than the paper *Les Colonies*. Frequently, of course, this adoption of ideas is far from being an effective assimilation, and is only a very superficial acquisition producing ridiculous incongruities. Thus when M. Hurard spoke before a local labor union, the worthy negro who replied to him gave utterance to Orphic maxims such as "Heureux celui qui a pu créer des ingrats," and "L'exile est la récompense des grands hommes" (referring to M. Hurard's exile from office). The strikers at François addressed the gendarmes in Mirabeau's famous phrase, "We are here by the will of the people and we shall yield only to bayonets." A speaker at a public function thus apostrophized the mother country, "O France, berceau de la liberté, terre chérie, où poussent les plus beaux sentiments."² On the other hand when papers like *Les Colonies* discuss public questions they bring to bear a clearness of style and a moderation of judgment that do not allow one to suspect the bitter virulence of political strife in the Antilles. They are full of enthusiasm for popular education, for equality of rights, for a civilization of peace and industry, for a separation of church and state with complete religious toleration. Often there is a severe self-criticism entirely different from the ordinary wailing of tropical colonists to which the world has become callous from long hearing, far removed too from the supposed self-importance and vanity of a colored population. They recognize and lament the many evils of their political life, but plead for time in order that they may learn the lesson of self-government and improve their institutions by experience. A population that is thus struggling away from its inherited tendencies, tendencies that are threatening to engulf Hayti

¹ *Les Colonies*, May 29, 1900.

² *Les Colonies*, July 30, 1900.

in the darkness of savagery, certainly deserves credit and sympathy. It must, however, be remembered that it is only a small part of the population that is animated by these ideals. The masses lead a shiftless life of indolence and ignorance, much given to petty thieving, drink, and gambling,¹ and influenced by dark superstitions of African origin. Through the efforts of the political leaders these masses have recently come to take a greater share in political life. In 1894, out of 43,000 registered voters only 9,500 exercised their right of suffrage, while in the year 1900, 23,492 votes were cast by a total of 45,650 registered electors.² In districts where a candidacy is uncontested, the vote is naturally very light.

As we have seen, it has been attempted to stir up social discontent among the masses, in order to gain the suffrage of the black electors. The socialist agitation in the islands has taken a purely aggressive form, exhausting itself in negative criticism and doing little to promote social legislation. The target of popular discontent is the sole industry in the islands—the sugar culture. Far from prosperous on account of the competition of producers in other lands, the industry is constantly threatened by hostile legislation emanating from the colonial democracy. There are two methods of attack: by an enforced increase in wages, and by augmenting the export duty on sugar. In Martinique, laborers until recently were paid eight francs for six half-days' labor, that is a franc per half-day with a supplement of twenty-five per cent. provided they continued to work for six half-days. The laborers usually divide their day between work in the canefields of the sugar companies and the cultivation of their own small farms or gardens. By obligatory arbitration the wages were in 1900 forced up to fr. 1.25 and fr. 1.50 per half day.³ As Hindu immigration has ceased since 1884 the employers are entirely dependent on native laborers. The export duty on sugar was recently raised from one franc to fr. 2.50 per one hundred kilograms in Guadeloupe, and from one franc to fr. 1.70 in Guiana.⁴ The sugar culture with its vast estates and its memories of slavery finds little favor in the eyes of the blacks; they prefer the parcellation of the tracts now owned by the industrials and the introduction of what has been called "a banana-patch civilization." M. Hurard expresses the inclination of the insular population to socialism in characteristic language; he says, "We creoles follow France because we have absorbed the

¹ *Les Colonies*, October 5 and 12, 1900.

² Election reports in *Les Colonies*, May, 1900.

³ Account of the interpellation of March 26, 1900, in *Les Colonies*.

⁴ *Annales des Sciences Politiques*, March, 1900, p. 261.

French conception, because we are of past servitude and hence by atavism predisposed to integral enslavement in collectivism, because we poor islanders can have no ambitions beyond being functionaries." The present governor has gone so far as to declare that in Martinique the régime of large properties is incompatible with the actual social state. In order to maintain and protect it, he considers it indispensable that the laws which govern British dependencies be applied to the colonies.¹ The French Socialists look upon their colonial associates as an important accession to their force and are ever ready to defend the colored democracy. "For us Socialists the negro workmen of Martinique are brothers in humanity, having the same rights and aspirations. They have their place in our hearts."² They count upon the colonial deputies in their fights against the reactionary tendencies and the colonists in turn are always pointing to their services in the establishment and maintenance of republican institutions in the mother country, as a basis of their claim to have the principle of colonial representation preserved and extended.

From the experience of the French Antilles we can draw some general conclusions as to the working of the system of representation there in use. Considering first representation in the national parliament, we find that it has given the deputies themselves great personal influence. Since the ministries are usually in need of every vote that can be obtained and since the colonial deputies are more independent in national affairs than are those who have French constituencies, their support is always courted. The very adoption of the republican form of government in 1875 was made possible by the votes of the colonial deputies; the Wallon amendment, by which the title of president was bestowed upon MacMahon, was passed by a majority of only one vote. In 1882, just when the affairs of the French nation were in a serious crisis, M. Blancsubé, the deputy for Cochinchina, was the leader in bringing about the overthrow of the Freycinet government. The colonial deputies and senators are by virtue of their office members of the *Conseil Supérieur des Colonies*, the assembly upon whose advice the colonial ministry bases its action. They also take a leading part in all congresses where colonial questions are discussed. The important International Congress of 1889 and the French national congress of 1890 were practically led in all their resolutions by Senator Isaac of Guadeloupe. He there favored not only the complete assimilation of the older colonies to the metropolitan institutions and the

¹ Cited in the course of the interpellation of March 26, 1900, *Les Colonies*.

² M. Alexandre Zévaès in the interpellation of March 26, 1900, *Les Colonies*.

abolishment of the "régime of decrees," but he also carried a resolution favoring a like policy for all colonial dependencies of France.¹ To the influence of the colonial deputies more than to any other cause may be attributed the persistence of the assimilation policy in French colonization. By the very act of vindicating their privileges of representation they favor the extension of these principles to the newer colonies; and as they are not only specially interested, but are also considered specially competent in colonial affairs, their influence has been preponderant. They were not able, however, to prevent the ultimate establishment of a separate ministry of colonies, which they had long resisted. Since 1882 there had been attempts to organize the colonial service apart from the Ministry of Marine. It was attached alternately to the latter and to the Ministry of Commerce. Under the policy of assimilation carried to its logical conclusion a separate ministry of colonies is unnecessary, as each of the ministries in France manages its respective share of affairs in the colonies; such is the arrangement with respect to Algiers, and this was what the colonial deputies had hoped to attain in their own case. The importance of the newer colonies and the growth of interest in colonial expansion led, however, to the establishment of a separate ministry by the law of March 20, 1894. As this ministry is naturally more interested in the newly acquired vast domains of France in Africa and in Asia than in the older colonies, the influence of the colonial representatives has been diminished in consequence of its creation.

No direct beneficial influence of the system of parliamentary representation on the colonies themselves can be traced, except in the matter of obtaining occasional favors of a fiscal nature, such as subventions and exemptions.² No thorough-going reforms in colonial affairs have been suggested or carried out by the colonial representatives. This is partly due, of course, to the fact that parliament does not as a general rule interfere with colonial affairs, but leaves their management to the executive. The representatives are accordingly inclined to view the affairs of their constituencies from a narrow partisan point of view. We have already alluded to the manner in which the senators and deputies of Martinique made of the strike a mere question for the control of patronage. A deputy of Guade-

¹ Procès-Verbaux du Congrès colonial National. Cited in Alcindor, *Les Antilles Françaises*, Paris, 1899, p. 104. "La nation est obligée en conscience de faire participer ses nouveaux sujets, dans la mesure du possible, aux avantages que lui assure à elle même la supériorité de sa culture et de son état social." Procès-Verbaux du Congrès International de 1889. Cited in De Saussure, *Psychologie de la Colonisation Française*, p. 256.

² Thus, *e. g.*, Senator Cicero of Guadeloupe obtained a reduction of the charges imposed upon his colony in 1900. *Les Colonies*, April 11, 1900.

loupe has described the situation as follows : " The greatest part of their activity is given, no matter what repugnance they may feel thereto, to the task of cultivating the good will of the minister towards their friends among the colonial functionaries. They must constantly be on their guard against adverse influence and spend their time soliciting support in the bureaux. The colonial elections have become a matter of mere personal antagonism."¹

As we turn from representation in the national parliament to the local colonial council we find that it is animated by the same political desires as the deputies and senators in Paris, and that its chief concern is the control of the patronage. The uppermost consideration in the mind of a councillor is always the gaining of votes through local influence, or the punishment or reward of the administrative departments according to the attitude they have taken toward his election.² The fiscal policy of the councils is governed by the same considerations. Expenses for public improvements of an industrial nature, such as harbors and roads, are constantly kept down. On the other hand since the influence of the general council grows with the number of officials dependent on it, the expenditure for salaries is constantly increasing. Thus, Martinique has 1400 functionaries out of 14,000 men who could possibly hold civil service positions.³ The bane of functionarism is fixed upon the colonies, and political life has consequently become an acrid struggle for personal influence and patronage. By the side of this expenditure for the civil service, large sums are voted for public education and scholarships ; the latter fulfill the double purpose of advancing learning and providing for the protégés of the politicians. Large grants and concessions are often made out of the public property ; thus, the council of Guiana granted 200,000 hectares of valuable land to one individual, and at the same time proposed to divide the colonial reserve fund among the communes.⁴

It may be interesting to glance for a moment at the parallel experience of Great Britain with the island of Jamaica. Although the English have tried representative institutions in the tropical colonies, they have never adopted manhood suffrage. The measures by which, under Lord Derby's administration of the Colonial Office in

¹ Letter in *L'Indépendant de la Guadeloupe*, February 16, 1899. Merivale in his lectures on colonization (1841) expresses the belief that colonial representatives would be mere party agents in Parliament.

² Debate in the General Council of Guiana, cited in *Annales des Sciences Politiques*, XV. 256.

³ *Les Colonies*, Sept. 15, 1900. Also Mr. Austin Lee's *Report on French Colonies*, published by the British Foreign Office, 1900.

⁴ *Annales des Sciences Politiques*, XV. 259.

1884, representative institutions were introduced into Jamaica and Mauritius restricted the electorate by a high property qualification ; so that for instance in Mauritius out of a population of 400,000 inhabitants there are only 3,000 voters. In Jamaica, Lord Derby accorded to the elective members of the colonial council the control over the finances of the island. We cannot here trace the history of the last fifteen years, but the most recent developments are so interesting that they deserve notice in connection with the experience in the French Antilles. On account of financial difficulties into which the colony had fallen, a royal commission was appointed to investigate the situation and make suggestions. The outcome was the report by Sir David Barbour¹ in which he criticizes the Jamaican financial management and especially the habit of borrowing for the construction of public works not directly productive. He also records "a serious defect in system in so far as regards the relations between the Colonial Office, the governor of the colony, and the elected members" which he considers "inseparable from any attempt to combine in a working compromise the conflicting systems of crown government and representative government." He believes that the constitution of Jamaica has aggravated the present financial difficulties, that it leads to much friction and loss of time without a satisfactory result. The colonial legislature is also criticized for refusing to vote the salary of a necessary official and because the unofficial members pressed for an increase in the educational credit. In his letter of instruction² to the governor, Mr. Chamberlain takes up these objections and enforces them from his own experience, as when he says that he favors retrenchment in the expenditure for education, which has not, he thinks, produced results commensurate with the outlay. He then instructs the governor to appoint the full number of official members and to retain them so as to place the elected members in a permanent minority in the council. He bases his action on the principle that "where financial assistance is given a colony by the imperial government, the latter must have control over the finances." Of course, the Jamaicans most vehemently protest against this suppression of the powers of their representatives. The mayor and council of Kingston in a petition to the Queen, submitted that "to reduce the educational vote will work a vast amount of harm for which no prosperity in other directions can compensate."³ But as financial and industrial relations are uppermost in the mind of the Secretary for the Colonies, it is very un-

¹ *Parliamentary Blue Books*, C.—9412, July, 1899.

² Aug. 22, 1899, *Parliamentary Blue Books*, Cd. 125, April, 1900, p. 6.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 32.

likely that he will modify his decision. He has thereby clearly entered upon the policy of doing away with representative institutions in the tropics. And in general, English statesmen have at present little but criticism for the policy of Lord Derby, whose Liberalism they consider decidedly unpractical.

In France too there are many indications of a changed attitude of the public mind on questions of colonial politics. Formerly the ideal of assimilation was proclaimed as the national policy almost without a dissenting voice. In the *exposé des motifs du Sénatus-consulte de 1854*, we find this statement: "L'assimilation progressive des colonies à la mère-patrie est dans la nature des choses, dans le vœu légitime des populations, et peut-être aussi dans les devoirs du gouvernement métropolitain." The commission of forty-five members nominated by the National Assembly at Bordeaux in 1871 voted: "Prenons pour devise: Assimilation politique des colonies à la mère-patrie."¹ During the two decades that followed, all the important organic laws of France were applied also to the colonies. The colonial commission appointed by Admiral Pothuau in 1878, and that named by Minister Duclerc in 1882, both pronounced in favor of assimilation, as did also the Colonial Congresses of 1889 and 1890. But within the last decade a new tendency has made itself felt. Already in 1888, Minister Dislère's scheme for further assimilation of the old colonies by erecting them into departments was defeated in the parliament. The troubles in the Antilles as well as the disappointment which the French attempts at legal assimilation suffered in Annam have led many politicians to question the wisdom of the traditional policy. Moreover the experience of the French with Tunis, where they have used the system of a protectorate without assimilation, has been so much more satisfactory than in Algiers or Indo-China, that the lesson has impressed itself strongly upon the minds of statesmen and publicists. In 1898 M. D'Estournelles de Constant introduced a bill for the suppression of the parliamentary representation of Senegal, French India, and Cochin-China. He believes that the system is so firmly fixed in the Antilles that, for sentimental reasons, it may there be allowed to continue, but he strenuously opposes the extension of the principle to the other colonies.² M. Doumer, Governor-general of Indo-China, in his report to the Minister of Colonies in 1900, discourages the idea of legislative and social assimilation.³ M. P. Leroy-Beaulieu, too, believes in administrative and financial decentralization

¹ March 28, 1870. Cited in Schoelcher, *Polémique Coloniale*, I. 16.

² D'Estournelles de Constant, *Contre la Représentation Coloniale*, in *La Revue de Paris*, January 1, 1899.

³ Cited in *U. S. Consular Reports*, Dec., 1900, p. 496.

and considers self-government and universal suffrage in the colonies as an absurd institution.¹

Here for the present the matter rests. It is clear that the function of the French Antilles as models for colonial legislation is past and that, while their institutions will perhaps not be disturbed, the French colonial administration will be guided more by English experience and by the evident demands of the great colonies recently acquired by the French Republic. For these tropical colonies, it is believed that experienced administration is the main consideration, and that a settled society should not be disturbed and distracted by the introduction of European institutions and the unrest of party politics. Instead of favoring general assimilation, French statesmen are beginning to show a more practical spirit in the endeavor to take account of the peculiar needs of populations in the most varied stages of development.

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¹ *L'Économiste Français*, Jan. 27, 1900.